

Year Round & Extended Year School Overview

Generally, schools operate on a 175 - 180 day system, and in some year round school models they will spread these days out differently with shorter breaks between each term. The most popular example of year round education is the 45-15 plan. This has students attending school 45 days and then getting three weeks (15 days) off. The normal breaks (holiday, spring) are still built into this calendar. Of course, many others ways exist to organize the calendar, including the 60-20 and the 90-30 plans. Examples of these type of calendars may be viewed here: <http://www.nayre.org/cal.htm>

The other facet of implementation is the track. **Single-track** year round education involves an entire school using the same calendar and getting the same holidays off. This does NOT add additional days to the school year.

Multiple-track year round education has groups of students attending school at different times with different vacations. Some of these schools utilize multiple tracks to aid specific groups of students. Some schools place all grades of bilingual or gifted and talented classes on the same track so that all of these students attend school at the same time. Some of these schools utilize such a schedule for financial reasons. Having multiple tracks allows a district to accommodate more students without having to build more schools. Wake County, NC reported that for every three multitrack schools, one less school needed to be built.

The **extended year** schedule can act as either a single track or multitrack, and could add 15 to 20 days to the total school year.

Academic performance

Year Round: There are varied findings at the impact on student achievement. In 1994, a study of three year-round schools showed a substantial gain in academic achievement for at-risk, low performing students. More frequent, short breaks provide struggling students more time for help. These breaks can be used for remedial courses, tutoring, and enrichment, if needed. A more recent study highlights this gap, by demonstrating that students from more affluent families have advantages at-risk students don't. <http://www.nayre.org./Summer%20Learning%20Gap.pdf>

The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction researched the achievement differences between year-round and traditional-calendar using data from more than 345,000 North public schools. It was found that student achievement in year-round schools was statistically the same as it was in traditional schools. Another study compared the mathematics performance of 44 students in 5th and 6th grades on a year-round track with that of 40 students on a traditional track in the same school, which found no achievement gap.

A study conducted by the Ohio State University found that, over the course of a full year, students showed no significant improvement in reading and math scores in year-round schools compared to those students whose were in schools that followed the traditional academic calendar. Year-round schools do not add more school days to the 180 standard academic calendar. The total number of school

days and vacation days in both North Carolina and Ohio remained unchanged, but instead is distributed throughout the year. Thus, students are not gaining more instructional days

The state of California's Department of Education claims that year-round schools' third-graders had an average increase of 9.5% on standardized tests and 13.3% in reading scores.

Some potential advantages would allow smarter students to have the ability to graduate faster by having more time on task. Class sizes are reduced in a multi-track system, creating better learning environments.¹ Another plus for students is that instead of failing an entire year of school, a student would only fail 45 days on a 45-15 plan, making it so that the student doesn't fall behind as much as a traditional school calendar.

Extended Learning Time: Another study highlights the impact of extended learning time on high schools, helping students to better prepare for post secondary experiences. More time is not a silver bullet. Successful schools accompany extended learning time with other inter-related practices, including a focus on preparing students for life after high school, a high expectations/high level academic core, and extra support to keep students on track with college-preparatory requirements. These extended learning opportunities allow a balance of academics and co-curricular or extracurricular activities that are important to students' broader development.

http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2006/10/learning_time.html

Effect on teachers and administration

Studies show that even though around 50% of parents are in favor of the year-round schedule before it is implemented, almost 80% are in favor of it after the first year. Parents and families are able to still arrange daycare as well as vacations. The year round schedule provides more opportunities for family vacations. This schedule can also save families money because they are able to take vacations during off-peak times. Teachers would also be able to increase their income by teaching days of class on their vacations. Teachers are also in favor of Year-Round School, because they can have flexible contracts, as in different vacation times.

Costs

Communities would save on costs since buildings that normally go unused for 2-3 months of the year would be put to use and old buildings would be closed to save costs. On a multiple track model, less text books and equipment would be required, since fewer students would be attending at any point in time. The same idea applies to teachers, being that with fewer students in school fewer teachers are needed for the smaller student population.

Arguments for Year Round Education

- Students tend to forget a lot during the summer, and shorter vacations might increase retention rates.
- Schools that are not being used in the summer are inefficient.
- Short breaks can provide time for students to receive enrichment education.
- Remediation can occur when it is most needed during the school year.

- Students get bored during the long break of summer.
- It's easier to schedule vacations because not everyone wants to travel at the same time.
- Other countries around the world use this system.
- More students can be accommodated at one school through multi-tracking.
- Decreases overcrowding

Arguments against Year Round Education

- Studies have been inconclusive to its academic benefits.
- Students are going to forget information whether they are out of school for three weeks or 10. Therefore, teachers could potentially be performing four beginning of the year reviews instead of just one.
- Summer programs such as youth camps suffer.
- Student summer employment will be virtually impossible.
- Many schools are older and do not have air conditioning.
- Band and sports could be hurt because of problems scheduling out of school practices and competitions.
- If the entire state does not go year round, parents could have students at different schools on different schedules.
- With multi-tracking, parents could have students at the same school on different schedules.